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ABSTRACT

The Interest Center at Hunger Junior High in Wichita, Kansas is an alternative program to which any 12- to 16-year-old student in the district may apply. Assignments are made as opening occur, and a balance of age, sex, race, and special problems is maintained. The center is concerned with recognizing individual differences among students, while simultaneously helping them learn to function in society and within their cultural heritage. Management activities are shared among all members of faculty and staff. Student learning is personalized through a variety of experiences and techniques which are also designed to encourage a positive self-image. Members of the center attempt to support, counsel and act as a resource center to students, parents, community, and each other. (Author/BP)

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WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT!

A

GUIDE

TO

MUNGER JUNIOR HIGH
INTEREST CENTER

WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WICHITA, KANSAS

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TO: Students, Parents, and Other Interested Persons

FROM: Dennis Wright, Principal

SUBJECT: Guide to Munger Junior High Interest Center

The following pages contain the concepts by which the Interest Center operates. As you read keep in mind that this is meant to be a document that can be changed at any time. If we do nothing else we must be willing to change when we see change is necessary.

I invite your comments positive or negative. We also invite you to come see us in operation. We are located at 1150 Bluffview Wichita, Kansas (Zip Code 67218), and our phone number is 684-8702.

Many thanks for your time.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We are dedicated to the idea that individual differences and needs must be recognized; in order for a meaningful educational experience to exist, therefore, learning will be personalized. We will present a program, through a wide variety of experiences and techniques devised to meet the educational needs of students. Also, it will be intended to help them develop a positive self image. We will support, counsel, and be a resource center to students, parents, community, and each other.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVIES

I Goal: Students will develop academic survival skills through personalized learning.

Objectives: 1). At least 50% of the students will show at least 1 year growth in reading as shown by the CRT Test.

2). All students will show a significant increase in Math skills at the end of the year, according to testing based on the student positions in the curriculum at the beginning and relative increase in the conclusion.

3). Teachers will develop innovation and personalized programs to accommodate individual learning styles and future educational needs of students.

4). At least 90% of the tested students will pass the English Proficiency test before their termination at Munger.

II Goal: An awareness of compatible social behavior will be promoted.

Objectives: 1). Staff will participate in and utilize effective teaching---counseling technigues.

2). The staff members will model compatible social behavior.

3). The staff will create opportunities for parent, student, and staff involvement.

III Goal: Management of the school will be a shared responsibility.

Objectives: 1). All staff members will participate in at least one management activity.

2). All faculty, and whenever possible all staff, will be present at 90% of the faculty meetings, sharing and participating in decision making.

3). All faculty, and staff whenever possible, will participate in 15 minutes of after school daily review sessions.

OPERATION PROCEDURE

I School Hours: Students will be in the building from 7:30 am until 2:15 pm Monday through Friday. We will observe all Board of Education Holidays. (Please see school calendar which is inclosed).

8:30 - 9:10 ---- First hour

9:10 - 9:50 ---- Second hour

9:50 - 10:10 ---- Break

10:10 - 10:50 ---- Third hour

10:50 - 11:30 ---- Fourth hour

11:30 - 12:10 ---- Lunch

12:10 - 12:50 ---- Fifth hour

12:50 - 1:45 ---- Sixth hour

II Division of the School Year: The school year is divided into four eight-week quarters. Each quarter is followed by an evaluation and re-enrollment period of one week when all classes are suspended. (See curriculum for further explanation).

III Evaluation: Grades will be given at the end of each quarter. However, progress reports will be given at the middle of each quarter to parents and students.

IV Attendance: Attendance requirements are determined for each course by the teacher. When a student is not going to be in school it is the student's responsibility to notify the school.

V Transportation: Transportation is not provided. However, the city bus does make stops at the corner of Lincoln and Bluffview every thirty minutes.

VI Telephone: Students and staff will not be called to the phone except in emergencies. Out - going calls are permitted by students and staff for school-related business only.

VII Personal Belongings: We do not have lockers at Munger. We assume no responsibility for loss of your personal property. You must keep a careful and constant watch on your things. Carry them with you at all times.

VIII Food: Lunches may be brought to school or purchased throught the school hot lunch program. There is no open lunch at Munger. Lunch must be eaten on the school grounds.

IX School Dress and Behavior: We approach, with tolerance, divergent dress, language, behavior, or philosophy of life that just might be disruptive in a conprehensive junior high school. We operate with the belief that regardless of unstable and verbalization to the cnntrary, every individual has a desire to achieve in a socially acceptable manner, to improve himself, and to be recognized as a worthwhile person. However, there are three modes of behavior that will not be tolerated and if a student exhibits them he/she will be immediately sent back to the school from which they came. We will not tolerate assaulting another student or staff member, selling or giving drugs away at school, and smoking on the school campus.

STAFF - 1977-1978

Dennis Wright ..... Principal	Susan Swanson ..... Math Aide
Janie Washington ..... Secretary	Steve Jacobs ..... Science
Floyd Lowe ..... Custodian	Sandy Hysom ..... Art
Dick Barnett ..... Social Worker	David Spriggs ..... Social Studies
Eva Murphy ..... Nurse	Carole Bishop ..... Communications
Teresa Noble ..... Instructional Aide	Charlotte Smith..... Communications
Georgia Deatrick ..... Math/Reading	Larry Dashiell ..... Communications
Dr. Lawrence Heis ..... Math	Dan Johnson .....P.E./Industrial Art

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

Munger Junior High Interest Center was established as a alternative educational setting for the many pupils in the Junior High Schools of Wichita who were not responding to more traditional educational approaches. An attempt will be made to balance the student body by grade level (7 - 9), sex, race, and age. Also a balance will try to be kept as to the kinds of educational concerns that each student brings with him/her.

The enrollment procedure consist of the following steps:

1). Request for Special Transfer Form must be filled out by parent or guardian of a student at the Junior High the student would normally attend.

2). The sending school must complete all referral forms and send them to the Interest Center.

3). An interview session must be held with the student and parent or guardian, with one of the staff members at Munger. During this interview session questionnaires must be filled out by both student and parent plus three diagnostic tests will be given. A prospective student must score the following on all tests to be eligible to attend Munger:

a). San Diego Reading Assessment; fourth grade, with assistance, level
b). Math test: 9 correct answers
c). IAR Scale (Locus of Control): 19 points

4). A staffing will be held on each student by the staff at Munger to determine if the student should be allowed to come to the Interest Center.

5). If it is determined that the student should attend Munger he/she will be put on the waiting list and when an opening occurs he/she will be notified as to when to begin school.

6). Each student accepted at Munger must go through an orientation session prior to his/her first full day of classes. This orientation session will consist of the following things:

1). discussion of school procedures
2). enrollment in classes
3). filling out of necessary forms
4). selection of counselor by each student

COUNSELLING

Besides classes and administration, a third aspect of most schools, alternate or traditional, is guidance counselling. Unlike most schools, at Munger the teaching staff is also the counselling staff. This union of the two marks our belief that counselling is a natural extension of a teacher's desire to help studnets get as much as possible out of their classes in particular and school in general.

The Mechanics

Counselling at Munger is set up in this manner. When a student comes to Munger he or she is given a brief orientation to the program and is asked to make two decisions: 1). to pick a counsellor and 2). to pick first quarter classes. Since the counsellor aids the student in picking classes, the counsellor is selected first. This procedure involves: 1). student signing up for a counsellor in the main office; 2). limiting the number of counsellors per staff member to 10: 3). letting previous

students have first choice at signing up (so that they can keep previous counselors); 4). inviting new studnets to select a counselor; and 5). finally assigning to a counselor those students who didn't select one, based upon our initial impressions of the student. Students are then given the option of changing counselors after the first quarter, since by then students should have an idea of whom they get along with best.

The students meet with their counselors as determined by the student's needs.

What a Counselor Does

There are three basic functions served by teacher/counselors at Munger and they are: 1) a guide, 2) a mediator, and 3) a friend. In breaking down each of the areas the following responsibilities fall into each category:

I Guide

a. help students in setting his/her overall goals, future plans, and progress toward fulfilling their plans. This includes such things as: 1) developing student's schedules each quarter; 2) keeping parents informed about their child's progress; 3) making sure all student evaluations for each quarter are properly completed.

II Mediator

a. this area includes such things as: 1) straightening out difficulties the student may have with the school in general or other members of the community in particular; 2) helping a student who may get in some type of trouble outside of school; 3) working with students and other faculty members when problems arise.

III Friend

a. this connot be legislated, but it is a role that most staff have with their students. Some times the best function a counselor can serve is to just take the time to sit down and talk about anything.

The Use of Staff Meetings in Counseling

A regular part of Munger staff meetings concerns individual students and the progress they are or are not making at Munger. At these sessions staff exchange experiences, approaches, and responses they have had with the student involved. A counselor may alert other staff members to a special problem a student is having, or simply pass on information he/she feels important for others to know.

A good example of how this works is when a counselor learns that a student is missing class. The counselor's first action is to speak with the student. What happens next varies with the situation. If the student is having problems with the teacher, the counselor would suggest a meeting between the two of them. If the student were just being lazy or irresponsible (hanging out rather than going to class), a parent would likely be notified. Missing classes is generally the first sign that a student is having conflicts with school. We find that confronting the student and dealing with the sources of these "unexcused absences" as quickly as possible can be imperative to the student's not falling into a pattern of recurrent absences.

Helping Students Select Courses

As stated earlier, on a quarterly bases, counselors help students select a new program. We have found that many students often have no idea what they want to take. The amount of guidance they require from counselors is tremendous. It can take a student several hours to finally choose an eight week program of courses. We point this out to underscore: 1) the amount of time involved in this process (in traditional schools this can take just a few minutes because most of the student's program is pre-determined); and 2) the large degree of influence counselors can have in shaping a student's program.

Counselor's Responsibility to Parents

Staff members at Munger feel an obligation to inform parents about their child's progress. However, this sometimes presents a conflict for a student. This is particularly the case when the student is on the "outs" with his/her parents and doesn't want them in any way involved in his/her school experience. In a situation like this a counselor might put a serious wedge in his/her relationship to the student when reports are made to the parent. Another problem which arises is that as a result of the personal relationship that develops between a counselor and counselee, a student may trust a staff member with a piece of information that he hasn't and wouldn't tell parents (e.g., running away from home, etc.). Yet, we feel this is something a parent should definitely know. How this is handled depends on the individual case. It isn't easy. Generally, though, we strive to work out some sort of compromise whereby the parent <u>is</u> informed.

Asking a Student to Withdraw From the School

There are students who for one reason or another don't work out at Munger- e.g., they are destructive to the school community (threaten other students and staff; steal), or simply need a more tightly structured environment (psychologically or academically) than our school provides. When the student recognizes these problems as well, and chooses to leave, there is no difficulty. But it is possible that the student does not share this observation; he/she is very comfortable in "doing nothing", or won't acknowledge, e.g. the destructiveness in repeated intimidation of others. A counselor, with the help of the coordinator, is then put in the position of having to withdraw the student if he/she still feels it's best the student leave. This is pessimistic about things working out for a student elsewhere. Another compounding factor is that a student may point to another student at the school and say, "But why isn't he being asked to leave too? He's done lots worse at the school". When it is brought up at a staff meeting that perhaps student "Y" should be asked to leave, the staff, may not always be in total agreement. They will abide by a majority decision.

When Munger first started, the staff felt the school should and could deal with all kinds of students - that pushing out a student you couldn't handle was what happened at traditional schools, that this wasn't a satisfactory way to handle the situation, and, as a alternative school, we should continue to try to work with a student no matter how difficult it was. Now we have come to see that there are times when a student remaining enrolled just isn't good for him/her or for the school community or for both.

Other General Comments

The arrangement of teacher/counselor raises two concerns: 1) it is more work for the teacher, and 2) shouldn't the students have the benefit of a "qualified, trained" counseling staff? As for the first concern, our answer is yes - and no. There's no denying that counseling can be terribly demanding both time wise and emotionally. However, usually the teachers' counselees are students that he/she regularly has in classes and projects. Also, a teacher's class size is usually less than that of teachers in traditional school. Time that otherwise might go to many more students can be directed to counseling. For us, the idea of teachers confining their roles to instructors of specific subject matter is only doing half the job.

Shouldn't the student have the benefit of a "qualified, trained" counseling staff? In cases of students with serious emotional problems the answer is yes. We do provide this through referrals to area mental health practitioners we know. But we feel that for most students, the counseling our teachers provide is adequate and good. So while no one on the Hunger staff is a professional guidance counselor, the personal guidance they provide seems to benefit students.

In summary, as guidance counselors at Hunger, we do just that - guide and counsel. We don't see ourselves as the last authority on educational technique, but merely as people who care. There are times when we can't help, but another student or staff member can. That the student gets what he or she needs or feels to be important is what matters most.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum will attend to the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of both students and staff. Since we are dedicated to the idea that individual differences and needs must be recognized among students and staff we will devise a program that meets the needs of students, teachers, parents, and the community. We recognize that students entering such an environment may need guidance in developing the ability to plan independently and be responsible for their own interests. Therefore, some structure is needed and that structure will be developed in this section of the Handbook.

In keeping with our goals and objectives set forth in another area of this handbook the curriculum is structured toward learning processes rather than subjects. There will be content nevertheless, for subject matter is the vehicle through which these processes are learned. Predetermined curriculum units have been established in Communications, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art, Industrial Art, Physical Education, and Reading. The flexibility to meet the needs of students lies in the individualization of su subject matter within each of these curriculum units.

Division of the School Year (Quarter System)

It is our belief that students need short term goal situations, therefore, planning for a whole year or a semester is too long a time for students to realistically set their sights. To overcome this problem we have divided the school year into four quarters of eight weeks each with the ninth week being used as a week of evaluation and enrollment for the following quarter. (See evaluation and enrollment).

School Day

The school day will consist of six hours in which students must enroll. Exceptions to this can be made for such things as outside work experience, attendance at other junior high schools for subject areas not offered at Munger, etc. with approval of the principal.

Enrollment Requirements

Each student must enroll in a communications and mathematics, each quarter. The other periods will be filled in by elective courses. It should be noted, however, that in order for High School credit to be achieved a student must enroll for at least two quarters in a curriculum area.

In Science, Art, Physical Education, and Industrial Arts we have one teacher for each of these subjects therefore, a student may not get his or her first choice each quarter. Those students working for a full credit in a particular unit will be enrolled in that unit first. Then those students who have not had the opportunity to enroll but want to do so, will fill in the additional openings.

Individualized Instruction

Each teacher along with the student manages each learning situation. The student's unique curriculum, within each curriculum unit, will be made up of many elements in common with one or many other students. The philosophy of individualized instruction calls for a large number of daily professional decisions about individual students. Therefore, the teacher responsible for each student should have knowledge of many options that could be used for the student and knows the student well enough to know which options to use or not to use with him.

In turn, the responsibility of the principal, consultants, and other is to 1) enlarge the number of options available and 2) help the staff to decide which options are appropriate and how to use them.

Evaluation and Reporting

The process will be as follows:

1). Every four weeks an evaluation will be conducted to determine the progress made by each student. Mid-quarter evaluations will consist of teacher evaluations with expectations for the rest of the quarter communicated to student and parent. The evaluation at the end of each quarter will consist of two days of parent conferences and two days of teacher evaluation of total program.

2). The purpose of the parent conferences will be to go over the evaluations with parents and to let parents know where their child is in accordance with the goals the teacher have set for themselves.

3). Also during that week students will enroll for the following eight week quarter.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

One of our goals is to establish an innovative (internal) governing mechanism so that staff, students, and parents all feel that they share in running the school. In order to accomplish this task different boards have been established: The Governing Board and School-Community Meetings. While there is some overlapping of these groups, each one has a distinctive function and it is hoped that with these mechanisms everyone concerned will have a share in running the school.

School-Community Advisory Board

The purpose of the School-Coommunity Advisory Board is to identify, consider, and discuss educational problems and issues. Also it will provide information on a two-way basis, from school to community and from community to school.

Membership on the Board will be representative of the school and of the community which the school serves. Members should be selected from such groups as the following:

Parents	Teachers
Non-parents	Administrators
Representatives of Organizations	Students

Board members shall serve for the duration of the school year. The Board will meet at least twice each quarter.

APPENDIX

1. What is the purpose of the Interest Center?

   Students will be encouraged to grow to the fullest extent of their mental and psychological ability. To accomplish this, we will devise a program, through a wide variety of experiences and techniques, to meet the needs of students, teachers, parents, and the community.

2. What is the prevailing philosophy?

   We are dedicated to the idea that individual differences and needs must be recognized in order for a meaningful educational experience to exist. We are concerned, as a body, in maintaining school in which students may keep their own identity, as well as learn to function in society within their cultural heritage as an effective individual.

3. What is the <u>real</u> motive for the Interest Center?

   Who knows the ultimate motivation of any of us? There are probably as many motives as there are people involved, some good, some irrelevant, some self-seeking, some altruistic. Would it be fair to say that it doesn't make much difference what the motives are, as long as they are constructively on students and how they learn?

4. What is the history of the alternative school concept?

   Some of it comes from the one-room school. Many prototypes exist; one of the most innovative, of course, is our own METRO. The rapid development, however, has been under way for only ten years or so. All indications are that the expansion will be even faster in the next ten years.

5. What students will be assigned to the Interest Center?

   Students may apply who are now in the Junior High age range - 12 to 16. Students will be assigned to the center when openings occur. We must however keep a balance between age, sex, race, and the kinds of problems students will bring with them.

6. Where is the money coming from?

   We are totally funded by the Wichita Board of Education.

7. How large will the school be?

Much of our growth will depend on how many staff members we can have. We know that individualized instruction can not be accomplished with a high teacher-pupil ratio.

8. Who structures the child's learning?

Each teacher along with the child manages each learning situation. A long range objective for each child would be for him to assume more and more responsibility to do this himself so that when he leaves the school he will continue his learning through life.

9. Who decides the curriculum?

School staff made a curriculum for each child, with advice and consent of all others who have vested interest, from the parents to central administration, and the school board. The philosophy of individualized instruction, however, calls for a large number of daily professional decisions about individual students. For both practical and professional reasons, these decisions must be made by persons in personal contact with the child, including the parents. Each child has his own curriculum. However, the child's unique curriculum will be made up of many elements in common with one or many other children. Perhaps a better way to state the answer is to say that the teacher responsible for a child should have knowledge of many options that could be used for the child and knows the child well enough to know which options to use or not to use with him.

The responsibility of the principal, consultants, and others is to (1) enlarge the number of options availabe (within financial limits) and (2) help the staff to learn which options are appropriate and how to use them.

10. How will students learn the new behavior required?

The students will learn in several ways, including (a) verbal instructions by staff, (b) modeling by student leaders, (c) experimentation, and (d) staff demonstration.

11. Will students goof off?

Yes, just as they do now. However, goofing off can be used as a learning experience if the student is encouraged to talk about the reasons why he is not doing what is expected of him. Also, if responsibility for self-directed learning is to be done, then some initial goofing-off is required when the student is put on his own. One fact is clear, students can never learn responsibility unless some responsibility is given to them in which they can make decisions about their activities. Tight teacher control will produce learning but it is not preparation for self-directed learning.

12. How will students react?

Students will react much as they do now when placed in a learning center or a library. Most of their behavior is determined by available materials and their relations with the faculty and each other.

13. What is done with the student who cannot work in groups?

The staff must help him to work on his own if this emotionally satisfies him and discover, if possible, the reason why he fails to respond to learning opportunities within groups. Of course, the "loner" has a problem, no matter whether in a classroom of 10 or 200. Only through the <u>human</u> relations of teacher-pupil will he be reached.

14. What will happen to under - achievers?

The answer to "13" probably applies equally well here.

15. What will be the teacher - pupil ratio?

There will never be more than ten students per class period unless the staff agree among themselves to increase the load for special assignments or team teaching.

16. Will counselors be used?

It is our belief that each staff member must be a counselor as well as perform other tasks related to his or her position. This includes all of the supportive staff as well as the regular teaching staff.

17. Will any specialists be used?

Yes, we now have on the staff a nurse, school psychologist and school social worker. We are also using a psychologist from the Sedgwick County Mental Health Department and we have access to many experts in curriculum and classroom management from within the school system and from Wichita State University.

18. How many para-professionals does the program employ?

As many as finances allow and teachers want. We now have the services of one full-time teacher's aide.

19. Will there be time for the staff to plan?

Absolutely! At this point all the staff has the same planning period. This allows the entire staff to get together each day if necessary.

20. What is being looked for in the teachers?

Each teacher must have accepted the idea of flexible, individualized instruction; and have the ability to work closely with other professionals and others who might work as support personnel.

21. Does the staff decide who is hired and fired?

No, not in the absolute sense; however, they will influence such decisions far more than teachers in other settings now influence such decisions.

22. How involved must the staff be?

Certainly more than the commitment of an average educator.

23. Will teachers work together?

Obviously. We know they can. Also, we expect a lot of give-and-take will occur. For some, this will be harder than for others, but education is a cooperative endeavor.

24. What training procedures will be used?

Learning by doing. Help from the outside will be called in when needed.

25. How much training will be involved?

It will be started early and maintained daily in some form.

26. Who will train the teachers?

Mostly, we will draw upon our own resources with all possible outside help we can find.

27. How will parents be involved?

In every way that can be invented by the staff.

28. Who will direct the Interest Center?

A Principal, with the students and staff mutually setting policies.

29. How will students be assigned to the Interest Center?

Mostly on a first come first serve basis. However, certain kinds of balances must be kept.

30. What if parents do not like the permissive aspects of the Interest Center?

The Interest Center is not "permissive" in the traditional sense. It is true we have fewer rules than the regular Junior High Schools. However, the student responsibility to and ownership in this school is much greater. Besides, no parent is required to send their child here.

31. What grading procedures will be used?

Individualized instruction, if truly individualized, still requires reporting procedures to parents. It is our hope to use other methods than just grades to accomplish this task.

32. What will be done about evaluation?

If "evaluation" is referring to the program, then the answer is an on-going procedure which will be established with the help of the Research Division who will continually evaluate our goals and objectives.

33. What happens if the Interest Center does not work?

It <u>will</u> work. The question should be what kind of learning problems does it work best to solve. Evaluation will answer this question.

34. Who is responsible for students leaving the building?

It is our hope to have many field trips during the school year. Students involved in these trips must have permission to do so from their parents. Students leaving for any other purpose will follow the normal procedure of checking out in the main office.

35. How will communication be kept open among other schools?

Lots of ways are possible. One of the most effective would be to have many visits and interchanges of staff among the schools.

36. Can administrators and teachers take the pressures of an alternative school?

Guess we'll find out. We think so.

37. Is this preparation for society?

If preparing for the world of tomorrow is best done by training <u>problem-solvers</u>, then the answer seems to be "yes".

38. Will the Interest Center develop better adults?

This is not really known any more than we know what traditional schooling really does. Perhaps 95% of what we do in education is done of faith. Let's admit it and start from there.

SCHOOL CALENDAR 1977 - 78

Event	Date
Orientation for Students	August 30-September 2
First full day of classes	September 6
Labor Day Holiday	September 5
End of first Quarter	October 24
Evaluation and Enrollment for second Quarter	October 25-28
Second Quarter begins	October 31
Fall recess	November 24-25
Winter recess	December 23 - January 3
End of second Quarter	January 9
Evaluation and Enrollment for third Quarter	January 10-13
Third Quarter begins	January 16
End of third Quarter	March 17
Evaluation and Enrollment for fourth Quarter	March 14-17
Fourth Quarter begins	March 20
Spring recess	March 27-31
End of fourth Quarter	May 24
Evaluation and Enrollment for next year	May 25 - June 1
Memorial Day Holiday	May 29

School-Community Advisory Board: will meet twice each quarter - September 16, October 21, December 16, January 13, February 3, March 3, and April 21.

OPEN HOUSE --- NOVEMBER 17, 1977 and MAY 4, a978